Breaking a Printers' Strike With a Typewriter

How One Magazine Defies the Typesetters and Prints the Copy Itself—a Revolutionary Feat In Publishing

By Louis Lee Arms

WHEN the papyrus dealers of the olden days went on strike, the ancients wrote on rocks, and in this strikeful era of human progress, when the printers won't set so much as a stickful, "The Literary Digest" resorts to the typewriter.

Consequently the current issue of that weekly, dated October 18, is a strange document that will interest alike technical men, the laity and the student of bibliography.

It is the first magazine ever published in America by photography. In bringing this about the typesetter or compositor was eliminated and the stenographer substituted. The linotype machine gave way to the typewriter, and the result, to say the least, is readable.

"There are two proverbs which cover the situation," said William S. Woods, managing editor of the Funk & Wagnalls periodical. "One declares that 'Necessity is the mother of invention,' the other that 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating.'

"We had our choice during the strike of suspending publication or assembling what looked like a practical process and printing on a new basis. We decided to experiment, and the finished product, though susceptible of improvement, serves its purpose and opens a new field of experimental research in newspaper and periodical publishing.

"The process is quite as simple as it looks. Editorial matter is prepared in the customary way and turned over to a stenographer. The stenographer types off the article and it is returned to the editor for a reading. That, by the way, is the final proof reading necessary, for the rest is done by camera, and photography cannot misspell.

"After the typed matter comes back to the editor a page is planned, including the art. This is taken to the art room, where the typewritten copy and the cartoons or photographs are pasted upon thick paper in the form of a page. That pasted matter is photographed and reduced on a zinc etching to the size of the 'Literary Digest' page. From the zinc etching plates are made and the magazine published by the usual print process.

"It will be understood that we only have scratched the surface of possibilities in this direction. But our art and engraving departments assure us that if a typewriter were manufactured with a type face the same as the usual eight-point on a linotype machine and provision made for flush line spacing, the finished product would defy all but the eyes of an expert."

While in the act of springing a revolution of sorts, it might be imagined there was no end of bustle and flurry in the editorial rooms of "The Literay Digest." Such was not the case. There was a dead calm, with none of the brisk winds that ordinarily issue from various desks in an average editorial room.

"Supposing the stenographer makes an error?" was asked.

"Here is how we doctor it," said the book reviewer.

In his hand he carried a sample typewritten page, upon which the stenographer had originally made an error. Correction did not involve the resetting of the entire page. Instead, the line in which the error appeared was retyped by the amanuensis and was then superimposed, by the a process of pinning, upon the erroneous line. In photographing the page the correction melted into the picture in such a way as to reproduce without blemish. Indeed, in the majority of the pages of the issue that already has been printed, there were typing corrections made, yet the camera corrects so smoothly that no eye can detect it.

By contrast with the orthodox manner of magazined printing one may see the number of movements that are elided by the new system. The magazine editor, under the old method, accepts a story in typewritten form. The story is edited, the art planned and the copy sent to the typesetter or compositor. The compositor then sets the copy from the typewritten page. It is placed in galleys and proof is read by the proofreader with a notation of errors. The errors are then sent back to the typesetter for correction and a revised proof drawn. This proof goes to the magazine editor and if, in the revised story, he detects any error, the matter is again sent back to the compositor, making in all three movements necessary on the part of the machine typesetter, which is one movement more than is necessary under the process devised by "The Literary Digest."

If photographs are used with the story they are made into half-tones by a separate process and then assembled or "made up" into the complete page. The system of "The Literary Digest" obviates this separate treatment of photographs by pasting the photograph or line drawn art on the page with the written matter and making a zinc etching of the whole at the same time instead of treating each separately. That is another movement saved.

In printing, whether the process is done on a flat bed or on a rotary press, the system is the same, and thus the "revolution" applies particularly to the matter of typesetting.

Meticulous care in pasting and photographing is necessary, and thus, if the new process is to be widely used, it will mean the expansion of the art rooms and new employment for art workers among the magazines and any newspapers that should elect to try "The Literary Digest's" system. But given sufficient stenographers and art room help and there apparently would be no limit to the size of a magazine that might be issued.

"This new system may be of especial interest to those who print small magazines," declared Mr. Woods. "It would be relatively easier to issue a small periodical by this method. It is certainly worth a trial."

The head of "The Literary Digest" said that while his work had been multiplied it was comparatively as easy to assemble an entire page by this method as to take care of the photographs and reproductions of cartoons, which was what he was called upon to do under the old regime.

The headlines are drawn by staff artists and when they are reproduced by a camera they are made to look precisely like machine or hand-set captions. In the accompanying illustration, for instance, the caption "Mob-Rule as a National Menace" is reproduced not from a type face but from the brush of an artist. These headlines are prefixed to the typewritten matter by pasting and then photographed.

It is obvious that while this manner of caption headline might be suitable to a periodical, some simpler and quicker operation would have to be devised if a newspaper were to be issued upon similar lines. There would not, in that event, be time to deal with drawn headlines which necessarily consume more time than those which are batted off by a linotype machine or set by the hand of an experienced printer.

While Mr. Woods estimated that the cost was approximately the same as that of regulation printing, the head of the "Literary Digest" art department rated the cost of the photographed page $7, as against $10 or $12 for the printed page.

The shift to the new formula was accomplished with the utmost ease. Although "The Literary Digest" of the current issue comprises eighty pages, it was not even necessary to hire extra stenographers, a half dozen of them completing the work. A great many of the pages were devoted to advertising, which as published in the usual way from plates delivered by advertising agencies. It is the claim of one typewriter company that it can develop a machine with the size and kind of type now used in advertising which, by the same process, would eliminate the necessity of constructing ads by machine and hand. Thus it would be possible to prepare a complete magazine with the assistance of neither hand nor machine set type, an example of which the current issue of "The Literary Digest" offers only editorially.

With the issue of the latest "Digest" number the editorial department wired to 150 editors in the United States calling their attention to a pioneer process, while pointing out specifically that "The Literary Digest" was forced to this experiment by circumstances over which it had no control.

At the Typothetæ Section, Employing Printers, 949 Broadway, those in charge preferred to say nothing about an experiment that may revolutionize periodical publishing until they had seen a sample, which had not yet come to their notice.

It was the opinion of one of the officers that while the method was theoretically sound, halftones, line drawings and even print were certain to lose definition by successive reproductions, and that the finished product, so far as being easy to read was concerned, would be inferior to the work of a linotyping machine.

The printed pages of "The Literary Digest" of the current number are not so clean nor are they so precisely balanced as under the former process, but they may be read easily and they carry information, and that, perhaps, is the first office of a periodical.

Last Week–The Normal Page Set on Linotype Machine

THE LITERARY DIGEST

PUBLIC OPINION (New York) combined with THE LITERARY DIGEST

Published by Funk & Wagnalls Company (Adam W. Wagnalls, Pres.; Wilfred J. Funk, Vice-Pres.; Robert J. Cuddihy, Treas.; William Neisel, Sec'y), 354-360 Fourth Ave., New York

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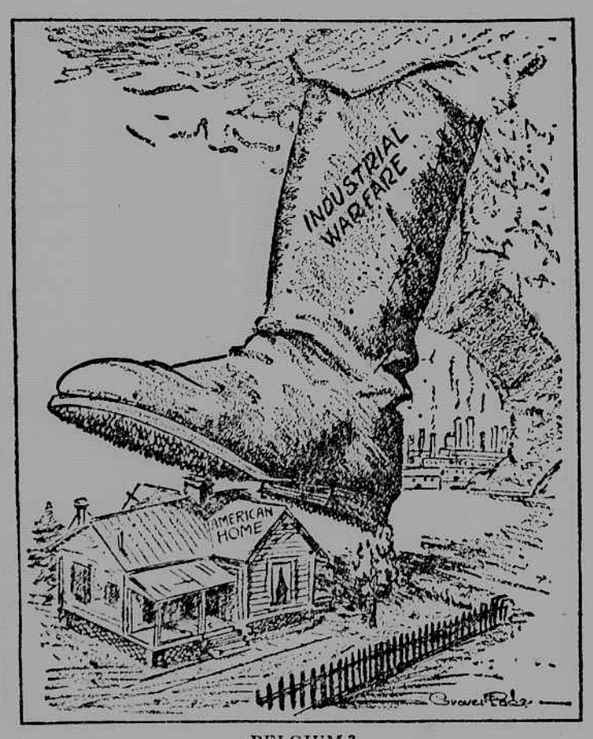
TOPICS - OF - THE - DAY

THE STEEL STRIKE AS A LABOR CRISIS

SUSPICIONS KEEP CROPPING OUT in the press comment on the steel strike that Samuel Gompers, behind his official indorsement of the strike, is really "fighting with beasts at Ephesus" in defense of the sanity and patriotism of the American Federation of Labor, that vast and powerful labor organization of which he has been the leader for thirty-seven years. As many observers see it, the calling of the steel strike at this time reveals the purpose of certain revolutionary radicals to wrest control from the hands of Mr. Gompers and the other moderate-minded leaders and place the Reds in the saddle, thus making it "the first gun of the industrial revolution." "Is the Federation to be an instrument of revolutionists, or is it not?" demands the New York *Tribune*, which pictures the nation waiting for the answer "in no lenient mood." Mr. Gompers, remarks the Minneapolis *Tribune*, now faces the supreme test of his genius and resourcefulness if he is to "steer a course that will at once keep him dominant over the more radical element in the American Federation of Labor and preserve to him the confidence of the American public which he won during this country's period in the war." Richard Spillane, writing in *Commerce and Finance*, says that the grip of Mr. Gompers on the leadership of the Federation slipt during his recent absence in Europe, and that the radical group who then seized virtual control was responsible for both the Boston police strike and the steel strike. If such a shift of leadership has occurred, says the Philadelphia *Evening Ledger*, it has been accomplished "without the knowledge of the masses of intelligent workers who compose the Federation." Yet it can hardly be denied, avers the Newark *News*, that "there is an element in labor circles that wants the business, the property, the profits, and everything else but the responsibility."



BELGIUM?
—Page in the Louisville *Courier-Journal*.

Public apprehension of such ulterior motives may explain the fact, noted in many quarters, that this strike is not a "popular" one. It will fail, says Secretary of Commerce Redfield, because it has not the support of public opinion. "It is foredoomed to failure because it is tainted with the false spirit, the traitorous leadership, and the un-American doctrines of the I. W. W.," agrees the Buffalo *Commercial*. Its success, avers the Troy *Times*, "would be a long stride in the direction of Bolshevism." "It is difficult," remarks the Rochester *Times-Union*, "to win a strike without the sympathy of the public; and that the strikers do not have in this case." The steel strike has "no public support," affirms the New York *World*, which predicts that if it collapses "there will be few mourners outside the coterie of radical leaders who have set out in the spirit of the German General Staff to establish their claim of domination." "The plain lack of hearty and general response by the steel-workers themselves," the New York *Evening Post* points out, "is proof that the strike was not warranted and should not have been called." Those mills that continued to operate without interruption, despite the strike, we are reminded, were manned, not by strike-breakers, but by regular employees who refused to heed the strike call. Mr. Fitzpatrick, chairman of the strikers' committee, admitted to the Senate investigators that only twenty per cent. of the steel employees were organized, and that the strike movement was initiated, not by the mill-workers themselves, but by labor-leaders from the outside. An Indiana Harbor dispatch quotes a spokesman of the Inland Steel Company's workers as declaring that ninety per cent. of that company's 7,000 employees were opposed to the strike, which he calls "a crime against the men that toil." This strike, says Senator Kenyon, chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor, is "the first skirmish in an industrial war in the United States"; and the New York *Times* agrees that "it is industrial war in which the leaders are radicals, social and industrial revolutionaries, while their followers are chiefly the foreign element among the steel-workers, steeped in the doctrines of the class struggle and social overthrow, ignorant and easily misled." It will fail, declares the New York *Tribune*, because "its motive is political; its leaders have mobilized industrial alienism for a disruptive purpose; and its purpose is un-American." Moreover, as the Los Angeles *Times* reminds us, it occurs at a time when

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This Week–The Page Photographed From a Typewritten Manuscript

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Vol. LXIII, No. 3 New York, October 18, 1919 Whole Number 1539

A MAGAZINE ISSUED WITHOUT TYPESETTERS—As our compositors and the compositors employed in many other offices in New York are taking a "vacation" in direct defiance of the orders of their own union chiefs to return to work, it becomes necessary to issue this number of THE DIGEST without their assistance. The anomalous printing situation in New York was explained in our issue of October 4th. How this number was issued without compositors will be readily understood by those familiar with modern typographical practise. To others it will be an interesting puzzle which we will not spoil as yet by explanation. There is one phase of the experiment, however, that is significant. Astern necessity is oftentimes the mother of invention, it is possible in this age of marvels that the whole future of magazine publication may be revolutionized by the elimination of what has hitherto been its costliest operation — the typesetting. The present departure will, at least, furnish a basis for many other experiments to this end.

TOPICS - OF - THE - DAY

MOB-RULE AS A NATIONAL MENACE

MUST AMERICANS ADMIT THAT THEY SHARE with the Germans the cruel and bloodthirsty qualities that go with the name of "Hun"? Yes, declares the Rochester Times-Union, "as city after city adds to our shame," Omaha following Washington and Chicago and Boston and Knoxville, as race rioting and lynching are reported from country districts in Georgia and Arkansas, "we must realize and admit that the unthinkable, the unendurable, has actually come to pass." The Rochester editor sees us living in "an atavistic period, a throwback to the days when it was all a part of the day's work to kill an offending neighbor." "Are Americans becoming a lawless people?" asks the Philadelphia Inquirer. In Omaha the city was placed under martial law after a mob had lynched an offending negro, had nearly killed the Mayor, had burnt a splendid new court house with most of its records and had caused a general paralysis of business. "Think of all this happening within 24 hours", says an Iowa editor, "not in the Balkans, not in Turkey, not in Russia, but in the heart of the continent over which waves the Stars and Stripes, representing the free democracy of America." Nor is this mob rule confined to large cities which are bound to have "a disorderly element of considerable number if small proportion", as the Cleveland News remarks, for the tiny hamlet of Elaine in the sparsely inhabited State of Arkansas "has produced a brief reign of anarchy as serious as those disgracing some of the nation's principal cities." Evidently, the Ohio daily concludes, "there is no special danger in numbers, no particular safety in littleness." All these riots, we are told, are proving that in this country the inclination is "stronger now than ever to resort to methods outside the law." The El Paso Times is but one of many papers which can see no solution to the problem; "multiplied denunciations of mob violence by every agency of respectability and decency in America have resulted only in multiplied lynchings and riots." The Times sees things "getting worse instead of better", "despite all that churches, schools and newspapers can do." The negro, we are told, is here to stay, and in increasing numbers;" every time he is made the victim of mob violence our civilization is by so much weakened; and yet we keep on lynching him." In these "orgies of lawlessness" which have disgraced six of our great cities, the Detroit Free Press sees the breakdown of society "under high tension following the war period." The Pittsburgh Sun thinks we have a "case of nerves" caused by the war, the disorder in Europe, and the delay in concluding peace. It may be a "passing phase" but it is none the less a "danger to the future of the Republic and free institutions." Why, the St. Louis Star asks, is this mob spirit so manifest? Some answer, it says, "must be found before the mob becomes a greater menace to America than German militarism was to Europe."

So we find editors and representatives of both white and colored races strongly supporting the resolution of Senator Curtis (Rep. Kans.) calling for an investigation of the causes of, and remedies for, the race riots and lynchings which have been taking place throughout our land. A brief prepared for the use of Senatorial investigators by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People reminds us that since the beginning of the year there have been 39 racial clashes in this country, while in the same period there have been more than 50 lynchings, all but four of the victims being negroes, of whom ten were burned at the stake. In 1918, 63 negroes and four white men were lynched and no one was ever convicted for taking part in these performances. In the years 1889-1918, 2,472 colored men and 50 colored women, 690 white men and 19 white women were lynched. In the Washington riots of last July six persons were killed and hundreds hurt. In the Chicago riots a few days later 36 persons met their death. The more recent Omaha riot caused three deaths. Less sensational race riots are held responsible for a score of killings.

No editor dares predict that a new race riot will not break out any day in any community, large or small, in North, South, East, or West. Editors who are awake to the situation generally make two demands, first, that means be employed to assert the supremacy of law over "jungle rule", and second, that the fundamental causes of the trouble be sought and a permanent remedy found. "No party of lynchers has ever been brought to justice. That might be tried," suggests the New York Globe. "Mob law and especially mob leadership is greatly in need of a lesson to be remembered in this country," asserts the Topeka Capital. The Duluth Herald, which regrets to see mob rule growing more menacing daily, declares that:

"There will be mobs and mob outbreaks until some day there is a legal wholesale hanging of men who have surrendered their will to the mob spirit and let it make beasts of them. And unless America wants to see every petty grievance handled by Judge Lynch, it will start that hanging bee very soon."

The police and civic authorities, as the Seattle Post-Intelligencer notes, "are always reluctant to resort to drastic methods to quell mobs. There is always the hope that moral suasion and such comparatively harmless force as is wielded by the policeman's baton will serve a dispersing purpose. The police shoot high." The Pacific coast paper is, however, inclined to think that "the natural reaction to the Omaha outrage will be a tendency to shoot first and inquire afterwards, and one or two instances of that kind will dampen mob enthusiasm," and the editor of The News-Herald of Franklin, Pa., speaks for many of his brothers of the press when he says:

"The suitable answer to a mob, at the earliest moment when its activities become threatening to the public peace, and the only suitable answer is bullets; from rifles and